UNCLE SAM'S FOREST RANGERS

Episode #44

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11:30 to 12:30 P.M. C.S.T. DECEMBER 22, 1932. THURSDAY

ORCHESTRA: RANGER SONG:

ANNOUNCER: "Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers" --

ORCHESTRA: QUARTETTE:

ANNOUNCER:

The forest is bounteous in its gifts to mankind. It gives us wood for our homes, our industries, and for thousands of uses. It gives us abundant supplies of pure water. It gives us opportunity for healthful outdoor recreation; it gives us beauty and inspiration These gifts are so manifold and so much a part of our daily lives that perhaps we seldom give them thought. But every year at this time we have another gift of the forest that gladdens the hearts of children and grown-ups alike in thousands of homes. You guessed it, of course -- it's the Christmas Tree. -- Many persons, interested in true conservation, wonder if the cutting of millions of young trees each year for Christmas tree markets is not doing a vast amount of damage to our forests. There is much wanton and wasteful cutting of Christmas trees, and this, the United States Forest Service strongly condemns. But there is a right and a wrong way to cut Christmas trees, and if the trees are cut under principles of sound forest management, our forest can supply them in abundance without impairment to future forest values.

In the National Forest, to which we are about to take you, Christmas trees are of course cut the right way, and as we tune in at the Pine Cone Ranger Station, where Forest Ranger Jim Robbins and his young assistant Jerry Quick make their headquarters, we find Christmas tree cutting the chief concern just now. We'll start out the day with them at the station. --

JERRY: (COMING UP) Good morning, Mrs. Robbins.

BESS: Good morning, Jerry. You're up early this morning.

JERRY: Yeah. Jim said we'd have to go up on the Forest and supervise that Christmas tree cutting today. -- Say - by the way - where's Jim now?

BESS: I don't know, Jerry. He got up and went out real early - 'way before daylight.

JERRY: Did he? That's funny. He didn't say anything last night about any early morning job to take care of.

BESS: No. I don't know what it was, but he went out without any breakfast, so I s'pose he'll be back before long now.

JERRY: Yeah.

BESS: We won't need to wait on him, though. Breakfast's all ready now, Jerry.

JERRY: Hot dickety! So am I! Lead me to it, Mrs. Robbins.

BESS: Wait a minute -- Here's Jim now, I guess. -- Out on the back porch.

JERRY: Yeah. Just in time.

(SOUND OF DOOR)

JIM: (COMING IN) Well - Hi there - Everybody up for the day?

JERRY: Sure.

BESS: You're back just in time for breakfast, Jim. I guess you'll want a good warm breakfast -- after being out so early?

JIM: You betcha. It's plenty crisp this morning, Bess. Pretty chilly around the edges.

BESS: I know. We had another freeze last night.

JERRY: What you been doing, Jim? Out so early this morning?

JIM: Well, I reckon I saved a few young trees we might be needing in our Forest in the future.

JERRY: How do you mean, Jim? What happened?

JIM: An attempted case of timber trespass. I found a fellow fixin' to steal a load of Christmas trees.

JERRY: I see. But how did you know about it? - so's you could get up there and find him first thing this morning?

JIM: Well, I just happened to see this fellow headin' up into the Forest last night with a truck, and I had a hunch maybe he was fixin' to bed down overnight in his truck and then cut a load of trees soon as it got daylight and sneak out with 'em before anybody knew it. He was just getting his ax limbered up when I got there and broke the news to 'im that we couldn't allow Christmas tree cutting on our Forest without a permit.

JERRY: Did you arrest him?

JIM: No. He hadn't done any actual cutting yet, so I figured I could let him go with a warning.

BESS: Well, I'm glad you saved the trees anyhow, Jim. I love a Christmas tree, but it always worries me so to see so many beautiful little trees - just load after load of them - taken from the forests every year.

JIM: It does me too, Bess, sometimes - if I don't know their pedigrees. I'd like to know that all the little trees that go into the Christmas market were cut according to good forest management.

BESS: Yes, indeed.

JIM: We foresters, of course, certainly wouldn't want to deprive children of the happiness of having Christmas trees. All we're asking is that they don't be cut in a destructive way.

BESS: Yes, I know.

JIM: You see, it all depends on how they're cut - and where. Our forests can give us all the Christmas trees we need, without really missing 'em much, if we're careful to take them only from crowded stands and still have plenty of young growing trees for the future.

JERRY: Yeah. When you get right down to it, though, one big forest fire can destroy more young trees than all the Christmas trees we use in a whole season.

JIM: That's true, Jerry. But that's no excuse for wasteful cutting - or for stealing Christmas trees - and lots of them are stolen every year, too. Lots of people ride out in their automobiles nowadays and cut down the first good-looking tree they happen to see, without stopping to think that they're stealing 'em.

JERRY: Yeah, I know.

BESS: Why, I've even heard of them cutting down trees in cemeteries, and taking them from the lawns in front of homes.

JIM: Yep. I guess they forget that all land where trees grow belongs to someone - to a farmer, or a lumber company, or to Uncle Sam, maybe; - in any case it's the owner's right to say whether he wants his trees cut or not.

JERRY: Sure. And taking a Christmas tree from a farmer's woods is just as bad as stealing stuff out of his garden or orchard, because lots of farmers can pick up extra cash by selling their Christmas trees themselves, and if they look after their woods a little, they can keep a regular crop of Christmas trees coming on every year.

JIM: True enough, Jerry. -- But say, didn't somebody mention the possibilities of a little breakfast not so long ago?

BESS: Yes, indeed. Everything's ready, Jim.

JIM: (CHUCKLES) Hear that, Jerry. I propose we move in on it, and then we can go on up and look after this Christmas tree cutting where the trees will be cut the way they should be cut. --

(MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

(SOUND OF CHOPPING SMALL TREES, OFF)(CONTINUES INTERMITTENTLY THROUGH FOLLOWING)

JIM: (COMING UP) Oh, Jerry --

JERRY: Yo -

JIM: How's the cutting going over this way?

JERRY: Pretty good, Jim. The men are doing a good careful job over here.

JIM: That's good. -- The best thing about this operation is that we're getting a good supply of Christmas trees out of the woods here and actually improving the stand at the same time.

JERRY: Yeah. Thinning out the stands where they're overcrowded here will give the most desirable young timber trees that are left a chance to grow faster.

JIM: Yep. And every tree we take out here will carry a red tag to certify that it was cut without damage to the forest, so the folks that get these trees'll have the satisfaction of knowing that their Christmas trees were cut the right way.

JERRY: Yeah -- Say, we must'n't forget to get a good tree for the Christmas party tonight at the school house.

JIM: No. I promised your friend the school-teacher I'd get a good one.

JERRY: So did I.

JIM: (CHUCKLES) I reckon we'd better work together on this, so's we won't over-supply the market. -- Yep. We want a nice big tree for the kids - and I guess the grown-ups'll have plenty of fun too.

JERRY: Sure they will. -- 'specially with you playing Santa Claus.

JIM: (CHUCKLES) Well, we'll get back to the village as early as we can today. I s'pose the schoolma'm'll want Santa Claus and his younger pardner here to help decorate the tree.

JERRY: Yes, she's counting on us. -- The boys're finishing up with their cutting over here now. (GOING OFF) I'll go check up on it.

(MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

(FADE IN WITH HUM OF VOICES; CONTINUES AS BACKGROUND THROUGH FOLLOWING)

JERRY: Hey, Mary --

MARY: Yes, Jerry? --

JERRY: Anything else I can do to help you?

MARY: I guess not, thanks, Jerry. I think we're all ready to start the program. Everybody's here now. My what a crowd! - Oh, I hope everything goes all right.

JERRY: Sure it will. It'll be the best Christmas party they ever had in Winding Creek - and all because of you, Mary. You arranged everything.

MARY: Oh, but you and Mr. Robbins have helped me a lot. That tree you decorated is just beautiful.

JERRY: I wish we could've helped more - but you really did all; you thought of everything, anyhow. -- Say, where's Jim now?

MARY: Ranger Jim? He's out in the other room getting into his Santa Claus suit and false whiskers.

JERRY: I bet he makes a swell Santa.

MARY: Of course he will. -- I guess we should start the program now, Jerry. I'll see if I can get everybody seated. -- (RAISES VOICE) Please, everybody, -- Please everybody be seated --

(HUM OF VOICES SUBSIDES)

MARY: Now, to open our program, we are going to have a selection from our Winding Creek Orchestra --

(APPLAUSE)

(ORCHESTRA: SHORT SELECTION)

(APPLAUSE)

MARY: That was splendid, Tony. (RAISING VOICE) Now, attention, please -- Attention, please --

JERRY: (SOTTO VOCE) All right, teacher.

MARY: (LAUGHS) Excuse me if I forget I'm not in the classroom -- but now we have our big treat in store, and everyone must be very quiet, especially the children -- for Santa Claus is coming.

(APPLAUSE)

(JINGLE OF BELLS, OFF)

(HUM OF EXCITEMENT; CHILD'S VOICE: "LOOK! THERE'S SANTY CLAUS!")

JIM:

(COMING UP) Well - well -- (CHUCKLES) Merry Christmas, folks. Old Santa wishes you a Merry Christmas. -- Yes, indeed -- And he's certainly happy to see so many boys and girls here. I s'pose you've all been on your good behavior lately, eh? Washing your necks and ears regularly, and helping your ma's and Pa's and everything? How about it, now? (SHOUTS FROM CHILDREN) Well, that's fine. It's the good children that old Santa Claus is specially interested in, you know. -- Well now, old Santa's brought so many good things with him tonight for boys and girls and grown-ups too that he had to have two pack-sacks to carry them all. This sack's full of things for the kids and this one's full of presents for the grown-ups -- and I guess we'd better open the one for the grown-ups first, because the kind of kids that Santa likes best are the ones that are always patient and ready to think of their parents first. -- Isn't that right? (BUZZ OF VOICES) -- Hmm. Let's see now. The first present here is for the Mayor of Winding Creek, -- our Mayor, and it's a set of building blocks to help him practice making Winding Creek a model city. Step up and get it, Mayor, and may the good wishes and spirit of cooperation that go with it from all our citizens help you in meeting the many complex problems that confront us nowadays in giving sound and wise government to our little community. (APPLAUSE) -- Well, let's see. The next present is for -- yes sir, it's for our schoolma'm, Miss Mary Halloway. (APPLAUSE)

MARY: (SOTTO VOCE) Why, somebody must be playing a trick. There wasn't supposed to be anything there for me.

JERRY: (SOTTO VOCE) I bet Ranger Jim slipped it in himself.

JIM: (CHUCKLING) Yes sir, and it's a pair of spectacles - maybe so our schoolma'm will look more dignified -- But wait a minute - the card here says: "Mary Halloway, you might as well have these; no one else needs them to see the splendid work you are doing in leading our children of Winding Creek along the way to knowledge, refinement, and good citizenship."

(APPLAUSE)

MARY: Oh, Mr. Robbins is an old dear!

JERRY: Everybody agrees with what that card said, Mary.

JIM: (CHUCKLING) Well, let's see. Following the schoolma'm is Assistant Ranger Jerry Quick -- funny how that happens.

(LAUGHTER)

JERRY: (SOTTO VOCE) That's a mean crack.

JIM: Jerry, as everybody knows, is getting to be a hound for stamping out forest fires, and the fires that are caused by carelessly dropped cigarettes worry him most of all. -- Well, now, look at this -- Jerry's present is a little box of cigarettes -- and the card on it says: "Not a forest fire in a trainload."

(APPLAUSE)

JERRY: Gee, I wish everybody used that kind.

JIM: Well, now, look at this next one out of Santa's bag -- it's a present for Mrs. Robbins. If there's anything that gets Bess Robbins upset, it's to see a bunch of campers or picnickers leave an unsightly mess of empty cans and papers scattered around in the woods after them. -- Well, Bess's present is a nice big can of fruit, and the label on it says: "As soon as emptied, these cans automatically roll themselves into garbage pits." Come and get it, Bess.

(APPLAUSE)

JIM: Well, -- (FADING OUT) Let's see what else we have in the pack -- Hmm. What's this --

(BRIEF PAUSE)

(FADE IN WITH HUM OF VOICES)

JIM: Now -- now for the kids. Old Santa's taken care of all the old folks, so I guess we're ready to open the other sack. There's a present and a bag of goodies here for every youngster in the room -- so flock up, you kids - come and get it -- (CHUCKLES)

(SHOUTS AND CONFUSION: ORCHESTRA STARTS PLAYING)

(ORCHESTRA FADES OUT; HUM OF VOICES UP)

MARY: Please, everybody - let's be quiet again -- (HUM OF VOICES SUBSIDES) Folks, before we close our program, I'm sure we all want to have a few words from one we all know and love. Ranger Jim Robbins was our Santa Claus a few minutes ago, but now we want him to speak to us in his own character. -- (APPLAUSE)

(IF CONVENIENT-)
(OTHERWISE OMIT)

CHILD'S VOICE: Look! It's the Ranger! It was only a make-believe Santy Clause!

BOYS VOICE: Shucks. I knew it all the time.

JIM: (CHUCKLES) Well, folks, -- now I can come out from behind the false whiskers, I never feel just right tryin' to travel along behind a false face, even if it's only playin' Santa Claus. I like to deal in the open, and if I have any reputation around these parts, I hope it's for playing square with everybody.

(APPLAUSE; SHOUTS OF "SO IT IS, JIM"; "HURRAY FOR JIM ROBBINS," ETC.)

At the same time, though, a little innocent make-believe is sometimes good for us. It's an uphill struggle for all of us, life is - and it takes a strong heart to face life's realities these days. A little harmless make-believe sometimes gives us relief; it makes the path easier, and it helps us to keep headed the right way and to keep our ideals before us. I like to think when I play Santa Claus at these parties that I'm really the jolly old fellow himself, with the power to bring happiness to everybody. It makes me feel good, - sort of a warm feeling in the middle of the stomach - when I see somebody happy. And I like to make believe that this big, shining Christmas tree here --

MARY: (CUTTING IN) For which we can thank Ranger Jim Robbins!

(APPLAUSE)

JIM: (AGAINST BUZZ OF APPLAUSE) Better thank Jerry. He did all the work. -- (MORE APPLAUSE)

I like to make believe this Christmas tree here has on it all the desirable things of life. You just have to search around a little among the branches to find 'em. -- I know I'm not too old yet to enjoy a Christmas tree,all lighted up and sparkling - and when I was a kid, I guess I thought a Christmas tree was the most wonderful thing in the world. (CHUCKLES) When I was a kid, we lived for a while out on the prairie where there wasn't an evergreen tree within thirty miles, and nobody would've cut one if there was - a tree was too precious out there. I remember one time I took a board and nailed on some laths for limbs, and painted the whole thing green and set it up in the parlor for a Christmas tree. -- I guess it did the work all right, 'cause next morning I found three oranges and six big red apples on it -- and best of all - what I'd been wishing for for months - a shiny new hatchet, all my own. -- (CHUCKLES) I reckon the folks figures they could give me a big thrill, and get some more wood chopped in the bargain. (LAUGHTER)-- Anyway, I thought then that when I grew up I'd like to be sort of a Forest Santa Claus, who could bring Christmas trees to everyone. -- Now as a forester, I guess I've realized that ambition, in a way, because we foresters have found that it's possible, if folks'll work with us to prevent wasteful and destructive cutting, to have a tree every year for every home in the country, and get them all from thinnings and improvement cuttings without damage to our forests. --

Our forests give us many things, but I guess none of their gifts brings as much joy to young and old alike as the Christmas tree.

(APPLAUSE)

(ORCHESTRA STARTS SELECTION; MUSIC FADES DOWN FOR ANNOUNCEMENT)

ANNOUNCER:

(AGAINST MUSIC BACKGROUND) Well, folks, the good old Christmas spirit certainly prevails in Winding Creek. But now, until next Thursday at this same hour, we'll have to leave the Forest Rangers and their friends. Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers wish you a very merry Christmas.

(MUSIC UP; FINISHES SELECTION)

ANNOUNCER:

This program comes to you as a presentation of the National Broadcasting Company, with the cooperation of the United States Forest Service.

er/3:30 P.M.
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